

Message Text

PAGE 01 NEW DE 00774 171810Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
AID-05 /062 W
-----171956Z 068660 /47

R 171257Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 634
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI 0774

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: SANJAY'S POLITICAL TRAVELS

REF: 76 NW DELHI 16144

1. IN THE WEEKS SINCE HE PRESIDED OVER THE MAMMOTH YOUTH CONGRESS CONVENTION IN GAHHATI, NOVEMBER 19-20, SANJAY GANDHI HAS BEEN BARNSTORMING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY IN A MANNER WHICH SOME OBSERVERS SAY IS REMINISCENT OF HIS MOTHER'S HECTIC CAMPAIGN TRAVELS DURING THE 1971 ELECTIONS. SOMETIMES ACCCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE MENAKA, OTHER TIMES BY HIGH-RANKING CENTRAL MINISTERS, SANJAY'S TOURS SINCE GAUHATI HAVE TAKEN HIM ALL OVER INDIA, BUT THE EMPHASIS SEEMS TO BE ON STATES OF THE NORTHERN "HINDI BELT", THE TRADITIONAL HEARTLAND OF CONGRESS STRENGTH. PRESS COVERAGE OF HIS TRAVELS HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE WITH NUMEROUS PHOTOS, BUT RELATIVELY LOW-KEY. THE OVERALL EFFECT, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN TO KEEP THE PRIME MINISTER'S SON CONSTANTLY IN THE PUBLIC LIMELIGHT AND TO FURTHER PROJECT HIM AS A NATIONAL LEADER SECOND IN IMPORTANCE ONLY TO MRS. GANDHI HERSELF.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 00774 171810Z

2. THE EXTENT AND PACE OF SANJAY'S PERAMBULATIONS CAN BE SEEN FROM THE FOLLOWING ITINERARY:

--NOVEMBER 28, 1976: A ONE-DAY AERIAL SURVEY OF MADRAS CITY AND NEIGHBORING AREAS OF ANDHRA PRADESH WHICH WERE AFFECTED BY A CYCLONIC STORM. THIS WAS HIS FIRST VISIT TO TAMIL NADU SINCE ENTERING PUBLIC LIFE. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN MADRAS, SANJAY ANNOUNCED THAT ALL PEOPLE WHO HAD BECOME HOMELESS AS A RESULT OF THE FLOODS WOULD BE GIVEN NEW HOUSES BY THE STATE GOVT.
--DECEMBER 5, 1976: A ONE-DAY TOUR OF NORTHWESTERN U.P.

--DECEMBER 18-19, 1976: PATNA AND TRIBAL AREAS OF SOUTH BIHAR. SANJAY WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO WIND UP THIS SWING WITH A VISIT TO ORISSA, BUT DUE TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN THAT STATE HE CANCELLED THIS PLAN.

--DECEMBER 24-26, 1976: ANDHRA PRADESH AND KARNATAKA, OSTENSIBLY TO INSPECT THE CYCLONE-RAVAGED DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH, BUT ALSO TO ADDRESS A SERIES OF "MAMMOTH PUBLIC RALLIES".

--JANUARY 4-5 AND 8-9, 1977: TWO SWINGS THROUGH A TOTAL OF EIGHT DISTRICTS IN EASTERN U.P. WHILE VISITING THE AMETHI PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OF SULTANPUR DISTRICT (WHICH ADJOINS HIS MOTHER'S RAE BARELI CONSTITUENCY), SANJAY RECEIVED APPEALS FROM THE INHABITANTS TO SEEK ELECTION TO THE LOK SABHA FROM AMETHI IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. NEWS ACCOUNTS REPORT THAT THE CURRENT MP FROM THIS CONSTITUENCY, V.D. BAJPAI, RENEWED HIS OFFER TO STEP ASIDE IN FAVOR OF SANJAY.

--JANUARY 12, 1977: A ONE-DAY VISIT TO HARYANA.

--JANUARY 15, 1977: PATIALA, IN THE PUNJAB.

--JANUARY 16, 1977: --JANUARY 16, 1977: JAIPUR, CAPITAL OF RAJASTHAN.

3. IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SANJAY IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT NADHYA PRADESH (JANUARY 22-23), ORISSA (JAN. 29-30), AND GUJARAT (LATE JAN. OR EARLY FEB.).

4. LIKE HIS MOTHER, SANJAY DOES MOST OF HIS TRAVELLING BY INDIAN AIR FORCE PLANES AND HELICOPTERS. ONCE IN AN AREA, CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 00774 171810Z

HOWEVER, HE USUALLY GETS AROUND BY ROAD, THUS ALLOWING GREATER PUBLIC EXPOSURE AS VILLAGES ARE ASSEMBLED ON THE ROADSIDES TO CHEER HIS MOTORCADE. IN MANY INSTANCES FLOWER-GARLANDED WELCOME ARCHES ARE ERECTED ALONG HIS ROUTE, MUCH LIKE WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER IS ON TOUR. SANJAY HAS RECENTLY CRITICIZED THIS PRACTICE, HOWEVER, SAYING THAT THE MONEY SPENT ON SUCH DECORATIONS COULD BE PUT TO BETTER USE IN SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS. DESPITE THESE PROTESTATIONS, HIS ENTRY INTO A CITY CAN BE LIKENED TO A ROYAL PROCESSION, WITH CAPARISONED ELEPHANTS, CAMELS, MARCHING BANDS AND GROUPS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN JOINING IN THE FESTIVITIES. ON ONE SWING THROUGH U.P., A REPORTER ENTHUSIASTICALLY NOTED: "MR. GANDHI WAS ACCORDED A HERO'S WELCOME WHEREVER HE WENT. ABOUT A THOUSAND WELCOME ARCHES WERE ERECTED ALONG THE ROUTE HE PASSED, LINED ON BOTH SIDES BY CHEERING CROWDS".

5. WHILE ON TOUR, SANJAY USUALLY HAS DIVIDED HIS TIME BETWEEN CEREMONIAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTIONS. OF THE FORMER, IT APPEARS FROM NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS THAT HE HAD LAID SEVERAL TONS OF CORNER STONES AND FOUNDATION STONES IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS. HE HAS PRESIDED OVER THE OPENINGS AND INAUGURATIONS OF EVERYTHING FROM BRIDGES AND IRRIGATION PROJECTS TO SCHOOLS AND FACTORIES. THE KEY ELEMENT IN HIS TRAVELS, HOWEVER, IS THE CHANCE TO ADDRESS MASS PUBLIC RALLIES WHICH ARE INVARIABLY DESCRIBED AS "MAMMOTH AND ENTHUSIASTIC". IN KEEPING WITH HIS MOTTO OF

"LESS TALK, MORE WORK", SANJAY'S PUBLIC SPEECHES ARE USUALLY SHORT AND TO THE POINT, WITH PRIME EMPHASIS GIVEN TO IMPLEMENTING HIS FIVE-POINT PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH FAMILY PLANNING REMAINS A VITAL ELEMENT IN THE PROGRAM, SANJAY HAS OF LATE BEEN DEVOTING GREATER ATTENTION TO TWO OTHER POINTS: ABOLITION OF CASTEISM AND ERADICTING THE DOWRY SYSTEM.

A FIXTURE AT MANY OF THE YOUTH CONGRESS RALLIES IS A CEREMONY AT WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF YC CADRE SOLEMNLY PLEDGE BEFORE SANJAY NOT TO ACCEPT OR GIVE DOWRY. DURING A STOP IN LUCKNOW, CHIEF MINISTER TEWARI PRESENTED SANJAY WITH ANTI-DOWRY PLEDGES WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN SIGNED BY ONE MILLION STUDENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 00774 171810Z

6. SINCE MID-DECEMBER SANJAY HAS BEEN ESCALATING HIS ATTACKS ON THE CPI AT THESE MASS RALLIES. WITHOUT EVER REFERRING TO THE PARTY BY NAME, HE HAS LASHED OUT A "CERTAIN PARTY" WHICH ACCUSES THE YOUTH CONGRESS OF BEING A "FASCIST FORCE" WHILE THIS VERY PARTY ITSELF HAD ONCE COLLABORATED WITH THE BRITISH AND HAD LATER ALLIED ITSELF WITH THE JAN SANGH. IN HIS LATEST ATTACK ON THE COMMUNISTS (JAN. 16 IN JAIPUR), SANJAY DECLARED THAT "THIS PARTY" (I.E; CPI) FOLLOWED ONLY A ONE-POINT PROGRAM: "TO TELL LIES".

7. COMMENT: WHILE NEWSPAPER REPORTS MAY EXAGGERATE THE SIZE OF THE CROWDS HE HAS BEEN DRAWING, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S SON IN A LOCALITY IS TREATED AS A MAJOR EVENT AND THAT AT LEAST SOME ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE DRAWN TO THESE SHOWS OUT OF CURIOSITY TO SEE THE PM'S SON.

8. A BIHAR CONGRESS MP THIS WEEK DESCRIBED SANJAY'S LAST TRIP TO PATNA AS RESULTING IN HUGE CROWDS WHICH WERE PRODUCED BY TRUCKING IN FARMERS AND WORKERS TO PRODUCE THE DESIRED EFFECT. THE RESULT, HOWEVER, WAS MINIMAL SO FAR AS THE IMPACT ON THE AUDIENCE WAS CONCERNED OR THE BUILDING OF AN IMAGE OR BASE FOR EITHER THE CONGRESS OR THE YOUTH CONGRESS. IT DID, HOWEVER, HELP ESTABLISH SANJAY'S NAME AND FACE AMONG LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE AND THIS, THE MP ASSUMED, WAS THE BASIC PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE "SENIOR" CONGRESS POLITICIANS IN BIHAR AND ELSEWHERE WERE PRIVATELY BOTH CYNICAL AND CRITICAL OF SANJAY AND THIS REACTION HAD BECOME MORE MARKED IN RECENT MONTHS. THERE WAS NOTHING THEY COULD DO ABOUT IT, HOWEVER, EXCEPT POSSIBLY SIT ON THEIR HANDS IN THE EVENT OF AN ELECTION.

9. DESPITE MRS. GANDHI'S DECEMBER 23 STATEMENTS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE WAS JUST A "SMALL FRY" WHO "IS NOT GOING TO BECOME THE PRIME MINISTER OR THE PRESIDENT OR ANYTHING LIKE THIS" (SEE 76 NEW DELHI 18576), IT IS APPARENT THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORT TO PROJECT SANJAY ON THE NATIONAL SCENE CONTINUES APACE. HIS BARNSTORMING TRAVELS THROUGH THE STATES GIVE HIM GREAT CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 NEW DE 00774 171810Z

EXPOSURE IN FRONT OF LARGE CROWDS OF PEOPLE AND KEEP HIS STATEMENTS CONSTANTLY ON THE FRONT (OR AT LEAST INSIDE) PAGES OF THE NEWSPAPERS.

SCHNEIDER

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, ITINERARY, POLITICAL LEADERS, TRAVEL REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE00774
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770017-0311
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770193/baaaeuxt.tel
Line Count: 171
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b19584de-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 NW DELHI 16144
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3681244
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SANJAY'S POLITICAL TRAVELS
TAGS: PINT, IN, (GANDHI, SANJAY)
To: STATE INFO BOMBAY MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b19584de-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009